

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and versions, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method, in a computer system, for monitoring service tickets for information technology service providers to ensure that levels of service required to be provided to a customer pursuant to ~~an~~ a contractual agreement between the customer and a service provider, are met, the method comprising:

inspecting a service ticket in a database to determine a deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved, with the deadline based upon a contractually determined severity of the problem and a corresponding contractually required time for resolution of the problem;

displaying, on a display device at the help desk, a graphical display populated with representations of service tickets that have reached a predetermined percentage of the time before their due date;

determining a deadline approaching alert time at which a help desk user must be notified that the deadline for resolving the problem must be met; and

alerting the help desk user that the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time is reached.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

determining a status update interval for the service ticket; and

responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved by the deadline, determining a first status update alert time to alert the help desk user that a status update needs to be sent to the customer.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, further comprising:  
alerting the help desk user that a status update is approaching when the first status update alert time occurs.
4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 3, further comprising:  
responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved after a status update time has passed, determining a time to alert the help desk user that a time to provide a new status update to the customer is approaching and alerting the help desk user prior to the time to provide the new status update.
5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein alerting the help desk user that the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time is reached comprises sending an alert wherein the alert includes an identity of the service ticket and the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved.
6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein the alert comprises a pop-up window.
7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the pop-up window is displayed on top of all other windows that are open on the help desk user's data processing system.
8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein the alert comprises an audio alert.
9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5, wherein the alert comprises a graphical alert.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved is determined by consulting a ticket severity table.

11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the ticket severity table is populated in accordance with a level of service agreement between the customer and the information technology provider.

12. (Currently amended) A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for monitoring service tickets for information technology service providers to ensure that levels of service required to be provided to a customer pursuant to ~~an~~ a contractual agreement between the customer and a service provider, are met, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for inspecting a service ticket in a database to determine a deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved, with the deadline based upon a contractually determined severity of the problem and a corresponding contractually required time for resolution of the problem;

display instructions for displaying, on a display device at the help desk, a graphical display populated with representations of service tickets that have reached a predetermined percentage of the time before their due date;

second instructions for determining an deadline approaching alert time at which a help desk user must be notified that the deadline for resolving the problem must be met; and

third instructions for alerting the help desk user that the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time is reached.

13. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 12, further comprising: fourth instructions for determining a status update interval for the service ticket; and fifth instructions, responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved by the deadline, for determining a first status update alert time to alert the help desk user that a status update needs to be sent to the customer.

14. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 13, further comprising: sixth instructions for alerting the help desk user that a status update is approaching when the first status update alert time occurs.

15. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 14, further comprising: seventh instructions, responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved after a status update time has passed, for determining a time to alert the help desk user that a time to provide a new status update to the customer is approaching and alerting the help desk user prior to the time to provide the new status update.

16. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 12, wherein alerting the help desk user that the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time is reached comprises sending an alert wherein the alert includes an identity of the service ticket and the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved.

17. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 16, wherein the alert comprises a pop-up window.

18. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 17, wherein the pop-up window is displayed on top of all other windows that are open on the help desk user's data processing system.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 16, wherein the alert comprises a graphical alert.

21. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 12, wherein the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved is determined by consulting a ticket severity table.

22. (Original) The computer program product as recited in claim 21, wherein the ticket severity table is populated in accordance with a level of service agreement between the customer and the information technology provider.

23. (Currently amended) A system in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for monitoring service tickets for information technology service providers to ensure that levels of service required to be provided to a customer pursuant to an a contractual agreement between the customer and a service provider, are met, the system comprising:

first means for inspecting a service ticket in a database to determine a deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved, with the deadline based upon a contractually determined severity of the problem and a corresponding contractually required time for resolution of the problem;

display means for generating a display, on a display device at the help desk, a graphical display populated with representations of service tickets that have reached a predetermined percentage of the time before their due date;

second means for determining an deadline approaching alert time at which a help desk user must be notified that the deadline for resolving the problem must be met; and

third means for alerting the help desk user that the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time is reached.

24. (Original) The system as recited in claim 23, further comprising:  
fourth means for determining a status update interval for the service ticket; and  
fifth means, responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved by the  
deadline, for determining a first status update alert time to alert the help desk user that a status  
update needs to be sent to the customer.

25. (Original) The system as recited in claim 24, further comprising:  
sixth means for alerting the help desk user that a status update is approaching when the  
first status update alert time occurs.

26. (Original) The system as recited in claim 25, further comprising:  
seventh means, responsive to a determination that the problem has not been resolved after  
a status update time has passed, for determining a time to alert the help desk user that a time to  
provide a new status update to the customer is approaching and alerting the help desk user prior  
to the time to provide the new status update.

27. (Original) The system as recited in claim 23, wherein alerting the help desk user that  
the deadline for resolving the problem is approaching when the deadline approaching alert time  
is reached comprises sending an alert wherein the alert includes an identity of the service ticket  
and the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved.

28. (Original) The system as recited in claim 27, wherein the alert comprises a pop-up  
window.

29. (Original) The system as recited in claim 28, wherein the pop-up window is  
displayed on top of all other windows that are open on the help desk user's data processing  
system.

30. (Original) The system as recited in claim 27, wherein the alert comprises an audio alert.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Original) The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the deadline for when a problem associated with the service ticket must be resolved is determined by consulting a ticket severity table.

33. (Original) The system as recited in claim 32, wherein the ticket severity table is populated in accordance with a level of service agreement between the customer and the information technology provider.

34. (Currently amended) A system for monitoring service tickets in order to provide reminders to a help desk user of impending times for actions, the times for actions being provided according to a level of service required to be provided to a customer pursuant to a contract between the customer and a service provider, the system comprising:

a monitoring server;

a database; and

a help desk client;

wherein the database stores tickets and information regarding ticket types, ticket severities based on the contract, and corresponding contractually required times for actions to be performed for each of the ticket types and ticket severities; the monitoring server monitors tickets in the database, determines when times for actions are approaching, and sends alerts to the help desk client alerting the help desk user that a time to take a specified action is approaching; and the help desk client displays active tickets to a help desk user and provides alerts received from the monitoring server to the help desk user.

35. (Original) The system as recited in claim 34, wherein the times are determined using a centralized clock.

36. – 37. (Canceled)

38. (Previously presented) The system as recited in claim 34, wherein the active tickets are displayed in a grid.

39. (Previously presented) The system as recited in claim 34, wherein the active tickets displayed are only those that have reached a predetermined percentage of the time before their due date.

40. (Previously presented) The system as recited in claim 39, wherein the percentage of time is 75% of the time specified in an associated LOS.

41. (Previously presented) The system as recited in claim 39, wherein the display may be minimized at the election of the user.